

MEDIA RELEASE

May 22nd 2017

RAPAD RELEASES EOI TO CAPTURE CONTINUED FENCING DEMAND IN THE REGION

The Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) is now calling for Expressions of Interest (EOI's) from eligible landholders and groups who are seeking support to build strategic cluster fences and or linking existing exclusion/cluster fences.

RAPAD is advocating to the Queensland and Australian Governments for the progression of strategic cluster fencing in the local government areas of Barcaldine, Longreach, Blackall-Tambo, Winton, Barcoo, Boulia, Richmond, McKinlay and Flinders shires.

This EOI process is to demonstrate to Government the ongoing desire and need for exclusion fencing in our region.

Cr Rob Chandler, RAPAD Chair said, "the board made the commitment to approach Government asking for an additional \$5m for cluster fencing in the region and we presented the Premier with this request when she visited Ilfracombe earlier this year. This EOI process aims to demonstrate to Government the ongoing desire and need for exclusion fencing in our region".

Cr Chandler continued, "through this EOI we are also keen to hear from producers who are seeking to link existing exclusion/cluster fences either privately or publicly funded. There has been a lot of anecdotal discussion and ideas around linking existing exclusion fences and we are keen to hear more from producers on this."

"I need to be clear, this is an EOI only, and producers who provide a submission aren't guaranteed funding or support but we remain hopeful that more funds do flow to the project. I stress this information collection is important", said Cr Chandler.

"This EOI will build on the success of the Round 1 & 2 cluster fencing projects being delivered by RAPAD currently which will see:

- Increase in sheep numbers from 373 358 to and expected 735 966, an increase of 362,608;
- Increase in wages directly generated from shearing and crutching to grow from \$4.48m to \$8.83m, an increase of \$4.3m;
- Net increase in jobs from 107 to 177, an increase of 70;
- Increase in regional gross margin from \$21.6m to \$35.2m, an increase of \$13.6m;

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- Total annual regional benefit from this funding is \$22.7m, that is a \$3.28 per year every year is being delivered to the region from every \$1 government has spent on cluster fencing in the region”.

The Queensland Feral Pest Initiative has received funding through the Queensland Government to support the growth of a productive and prosperous food and fibre sector in Queensland and the Australian Government Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, the Australian Government's plan for stronger farmers and a stronger economy.

For more information please contact
Rob Chandler RAPAD Chair 0427 512 314
David Arnold RAPAD CEO 0428 583 301

Ends.

RAPAD QFPI Rd 1 and 2 Cluster Fencing Project Summary

This funding is about **MORE THAN JUST A FENCE**, it is about:

- creating jobs in the region both directly, and indirectly along the supply chain and via the multipliers effect throughout regional communities;
- empowering people and giving them back control of their time, finances and wellbeing;
- delivering regional prosperity through reduced credit problems;
- enabling people to become better equipped to manage total grazing pressure and withstand future drought events; and
- delivering the most significant industry infrastructure for decades.

The long term goal is for this funding to be the catalyst for growing jobs and achieving significant improvement in the profitability of regional businesses (both rural and non-rural) through the demonstration of the economic, social and environmental benefit of cluster fencing.

Project Data*:

- 23 clusters, 124 properties, fencing 2563km to protect 1.5m ha;
- Represents approximately a 35% public and 65% private investment;
- Government expenditure of fencing \$6.95m, total annual regional benefit \$22.7m which is a \$3.28 return per year every year from \$1 government spend; and
- 6 new jobs provided so far so far for the long term unemployed and we expect at least another 10 jobs generated.

	Before	After	Increase
Sheep Numbers	373 358	735 966	362 608
Sheep variable labour required	\$4,480,296	\$8,831,592	\$4,351,296
Net increase in jobs	107	177	70
Increased Sheep Gross Margin	\$8,303,482	\$25,486,503	\$17,183,021
Increased Regional Gross Margin	\$21,642,98	\$35,296,097	\$13,653,116
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**Project data includes successful Round 1 and Round 2 applicants and was developed in partnership with Andrew Perkins, Williams Hall Chadwick, as part of the project monitoring and evaluation process.*

The below examples were collected from successful RAPAD QFPI Round 1 cluster applicants:

The RAPAD region pre fencing:

- In the last 12 months wild dogs have cost our cluster \$1.4m, we've seen our lambing percentage reduce from 80% to 30%, (loss of 11,275 lambs), lost 23,453 fleeces and lost 50% of lambs born (3,500 lambs);
- Our cluster has lost \$938 890 due to wild dogs over the last couple of years;
- Our lambing rates have been slashed from a 10 year average of 70% to 15% costing us \$595 000 a year, with full wool sheep losses costing an additional \$250 000 p.a.;
- Basically wild dogs have become so prevalent that sheep or goat enterprises are completely unviable for our cluster;
- Historically, our cluster's country has always been a safe haven for grazing our stock, especially sheep, with very good survival rates, lambing rates and production figures. However, due to the wild dog impact, many paddocks cannot be used and rotation of paddocks is no longer viable; and
- The stress of dealing with the ongoing wild dog threats has a genuine negative impact on our mental state and the wellbeing of all of us in the cluster.

The RAPAD region post fencing:

- Post fencing our cluster will be in a position to both maintain and increase sheep numbers, added to this the opportunity to diversify into goat enterprises, will result in a potential increase in income of up to \$1.45M p.a. to the cluster and generate wages of \$200,000 p.a. to the local community;
- If lambing survival increases from 50% to 90%, we could return an additional extra \$400,000 p.a. at current prices;
- Our forecasting shows with an increase of lamb weaning to our usual 70% our returns will increase by \$906,000 per year just on weaned lambs and the additional sheep that can be run. Wool production will double and resulting in a conservative increase of \$250,000 p.a.;
- Once fenced we will be able to implement new and improved management practices and naturally graze paddocks; and
- Once fenced we there will be a massive reduction in stress levels for all people involved in the management of sheep flocks.

As part of the project the RAPAD Youtube channel was launched allowing people to hear from the cluster members themselves on how much of a difference the project is making to them and their families. Search "Rapad cluster fencing" or https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=rapad+cluster+fencing